



HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRESS FOR VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE

“FROM STONEBRIDGE 1979 TO 1980”



federal emergency
management agency
U.S. fire administration

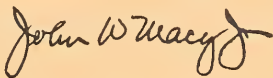


FOREWORD

I am firmly convinced of the importance and necessity of the Volunteer Fire Service in handling emergency situations and reducing fire loss. The devastation of fire can only be controlled through effective, coordinated management at local, state, and national levels. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is pledged, through the leadership of the U.S. Fire Administration, to decrease the social and economic costs of fires. Therefore, I will do all I can to address the volunteers' concerns and assist them in answering their needs.

Stonebridge Conference of 1979 demonstrated not only our intent to deal with the problems of the Volunteer Fire Service, but also set a pattern for our entire agency to follow -- the emphasis on practical, demonstrated programs that can be implemented within the range of local resources available to meet the volunteers' needs. Stonebridge 1980 will assess what has transpired in the past year and will establish appropriate and realistic priorities of the future. I am particularly interested in your comments and suggestions regarding the Fire Administration's Emergency First Responder Program.

As Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, I wish to commend all participants of the Stonebridge Conferences. We are dedicated even further to improve fire protection coordination at the national level through continued communication at all levels of government. This is our response to the Volunteer Fire Service. We need you on our team.



John W. Macy, Jr.
Director
Federal Emergency Management Agency



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Director
Federal Emergency Management Agency

"Stonebridge" will historically signify the emergence of the Volunteer Fire Service as an identified force in our attack on the nation's fire problem.

The purpose of this report is to provide a briefing of Stonebridge 1979, with emphasis on the recommendations which came from the workshops, and to demonstrate the impact of Stonebridge 1979 on the USFA programming.

The Stonebridge Conference of 1979 was a cooperative effort between the United States Fire Administration and the National Volunteer Council to explore the volunteers' needs and to determine the necessary response at all levels of government.

A significant breakthrough was made at Stonebridge by focusing national attention on the problems and needs of the nearly one million volunteer firefighters and giving open recognition and support to their common concerns.

The origins of the workshop may be traced to March 1979 when I met with the National Volunteer Fire Council Board of Directors and challenged them to define and document the major needs of the Volunteer Fire Service. Stonebridge 1979 brought together volunteer representatives from 49 states to create a unified plan for action.

The opportunity was accepted; the challenge was met; the needs were identified. The U.S. Fire Administration is committed to support and assist the findings and resolutions of the Stonebridge Conference.

Some of the needs of the conference are already being met. Included in this report are descriptions of specific programs of the Office of Planning and Education, the National Fire Data Center, and the National Fire Academy, targeted to the volunteers, which the U.S. Fire Administration has produced or is developing as a result of Stonebridge 1979. We have summarized the results of a fact finding report, "National Volunteer Firefighter's Survey," prepared as a joint effort by the National Volunteer Fire Council and the University of Wisconsin's Survey Research Laboratory, and sponsored by the USFA.

Stonebridge II, August 8-9-10, 1980, provides an opportunity for review of the programs and an assessment of the needs that emerged from Stonebridge 1979. That first conference clearly identified the role of the volunteers and helped us to specify areas and programs for refinement and improvement. We anticipate new initiatives as a result of Stonebridge II. The Volunteer Fire Service will be asked for input and assistance in developing and implementing the Fire Administration's Emergency First Responder Program. Increased support and assistance for the Volunteer Fire Service continue as goals for the USFA at Stonebridge II.



Gordon Vickery
Administrator
U.S. Fire Administration



Gordon Vickery
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Major Needs of the Volunteer Fire Service

When the participants met together for the first day of Stonebridge, August 17, 1979, they were challenged to define the major needs of the Volunteer Fire Service. The volunteers considered the issues and shared information and experience to provide insight and dimension. Two days later, the 75 participants had reached a high degree of consensus, and through a series of workshops had identified and analyzed the most important topics to the Volunteer Fire Service. In order of importance, the issues are:

1. *Training*
2. *Information Transfer*
3. *Federal Assistance*
4. *Hazardous Materials*
5. *Arson*
6. *Personnel Issues*
7. *Community Relations*
8. *Business Management*
9. *Emergency Medical Services*

The first three topics -- Training, Information Transfer, and Federal Assistance -- were unanimously selected as top priority fundamental needs and were common components of all the solutions discussed at the Workshop.

Training

Workshop participants overwhelmingly selected the need for improved training as the number one issue facing the Volunteer Fire Service. A nationwide training system requires the coordination of Federal, state, and local training standards. The workgroups recommended that states should develop a training and education plan which adapts national standards to meet state needs and which includes certification of an adequate number of instructors. Local organizations would then augment this plan with local programs to develop volunteers' skills and to achieve state minimum standards.

USFA Major Actions -

Training

- o *NFA Resident Courses*



including weekend seminars. Curriculum, July/December, includes three new offerings scheduled with the volunteer in mind. (Courses of one or two weeks with classes starting on Saturdays to permit minimal loss of work days.)

- o *NFA Outreach Field Program Division. Addresses local needs and coordinates and makes available courses desired by particular areas. Designed to support existing training efforts at the state and local levels and have volunteer fire service personnel as the priority target audience.*
- o *Five Cluster Programs Located in areas of high volunteer concentration - Lawrence, KS; Indianapolis, IN; Montgomery County, PA; Portland, OR; Little Rock, AR - in cooperation with state and local fire trainers.*
- o *Open Learning Fire Service Program. Under development - offering courses in Fire Adminis-*

tration and Fire Prevention Technology designed for independent study leading to a baccalaureate degree. Two courses being delivered: Personnel Management for the Fire Service; Fire Prevention Organization and Management for the Fire Service.

- o *National Fire Incident Reporting System Training Courses. Held twice in each state starting up in the NFIRS system.*

USFA Actions Under Development - Training

- o *NFA courses in planning state. Hazardous Materials; Fire Safe Building Design I and II; Audio-Visual Production; Instructional Techniques for Company Officers; Aircraft Crash Fire Rescue; Management of Arson Programs; Codes and Ordinances.*
- o *Open University additional courses. (4 to 6) A higher educational project of the International Association of*

Fire Fighters (IAFF). Provides access to higher education for all fire service personnel anywhere in the country. An experimental project funded by the USFA National Fire Academy which allows students to study in convenient manner.

- o *Additional NFA "Cluster" programs. (8 to 10) Will be implemented in FY 1981 - locations to be determined.*

Information Transfer

Workshop participants stated that the need to establish a national information transfer system is second only to the need for increased training. It was recommended that the USFA develop an information exchange program in cooperation with state fire organization publications and a national resource center to catalog and circulate information on request. The center would include a nationwide emergency communication system to transmit time-critical information to all departments.

State organizations could support this system by establishing an alerting system to relay emergency notices between departments by maintaining a state clearinghouse, by exchanging information with the USFA's resource center, and by improving the information transfer between local departments.

USFA Major Actions - Information Transfer

- o *USFA Newsletter "Fully Involved."*
- o *Press releases on current items.*
- o *USFA conference participation. (regional and national)*
- o *10 USFA regional fire representatives.*
- o *Catalog of USFA publications. Describes literature of USFA since 1974. Includes arson, home fire-safety technology and public education, firefighter health and safety, fire department management, and other fire-related topics.*
- o *USFA Library. A national resource center to catalogue and circulate information on request-utilized for personnel of fire departments as a resource center for general and specific information or as a referral service for technical data.*
- o *NFIRS Newsletter and Technical Bulletins. Tells participants about latest computer software and information for using the system.*
- o *The National Fire Data Center Maps. Shows fire death rates for each county. Available from National Fire Data Center.*
- o *Resource Exchange Bulletins. Promotes the exchange of program ideas and materials in: Public Education; Master Planning; Arson; Emergency Medical Services.*
- o *Survey study of volunteer fire departments. Provides quantitative information on the major characteristics of volunteer fire services in the*



United States. (Detailed description at end.)

- o *NFIRS State Users Meeting. Annual meeting comprised of five workshops.*
- o *USFA Reports. Highlights of Fire in the United States; Smoke Detectors and Legislation, Computers for Fire Departments, among others.*
- o *Fire Technology Abstracts.*
- o *Sources of Federal Funds for the Fire Service.*
- o *Arson Resource Directory. Descriptive national listing of organizations, resources, programs, and persons involved in arson prevention and control.*
- o *Regional Workshops on topical subjects. Women in the Fire Service and EMS.*
- o *Arson task force seminars. Presented in over 80 locations in 28 states with over 3,000 participants.*
- o *Public Fire Education Resource Center. A clearinghouse for information on public fire education programs and materials.*
- o *The Fire Academy Library. Functions as an information resource center.*

USFA Actions Under Development - Information Transfer

- o *NFIRS Data Use Workshops.*
- o *Public Technology Inc. (PTI) Project. To help several cities use their fire data better in making management decisions.*
- o *"Wingspread" - NFA external bulletin. Outlines National Fire Academy program activities for the fire services.*

Federal Assistance

Participants concluded that

volunteer departments need assistance in obtaining Federal funds. They continue to seek better access to revenue sharing funds, Federally guaranteed loans and matching grants. The participants felt that the USFA could have greater impact than local agencies in working with other Federal agencies to cut red tape and to make the agencies more sensitive to the special needs of the Volunteer Fire Service. Specifically, the workgroups requested Federal support in information exchange, training and technical assistance.



USFA Major Actions - Federal Assistance

(Federal Assistance in Training and Information Exchange is treated under those topics.)

Technical Assistance

- o Distribution of information on obtaining Federal grants. Workshop held as part of the 1979 Annual Meeting of the IAF. Over 1,000 grantsmanship packages mailed out since Stonebridge 1979.
- o National Fire Incident Reporting System. To collect and analyze key data on individual fires around the country for greater local understanding of where and how fires happen.
- o Master Planning. 16 consultants available nationwide at no cost to communities.
- o Public Fire Education Program Planning, Implementation and Evaluation. 26 sites in states and or communities.
- o Use of mass media for public fire education. Field experts for delivery of technical assistance in 16 sites in states and or communities.
- o Arson Task Force. To assist communities in uniting the efforts of the fire service, police, prosecutors, court officials and other community leaders.
- o Arson Information Management Systems (AIMS). Manager's tool for handling an arson problem to predict which buildings are most susceptible to arson-for-profit.
- o Emergency Medical Services. Provides for specific fire service EMS needs offering a national fire service EMS resource center, technical assistance and a variety of resource materials.
- o Academy Planning and Assistance Program. Provides financial support and technical assistance to state and local governments in planning

fire training and education programs.

USFA Actions Under Development - Federal Assistance

- o Samples of state level legislation which authorizes low-interest loans for fire departments being collected by USFA.
- o Examples of successful fire protection grant proposals to government and non-government agencies being collected by USFA. To form the basic part of a reference system to help volunteer departments write successful proposals and introduce legislation to provide sources of funding for fire protection improvements. Example: State of Maryland. Obtained Department of Transportation funding to purchase and equip a Hazardous Materials Mobile Unit.

Hazardous Materials

Volunteers determined that their principal local need in this area is the development of a program to alert fire departments to the dangers of hazardous materials incidents. They called upon state agencies and the U.S. Fire Administration to deliver the necessary training support and upon the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop a national hazardous materials marking system. It was further suggested that FEMA coordinate Federal action to prevent hazardous materials incidents and to advance stiff enforcement of hazardous materials regulations to deter or punish offenders. In addition, the workshop attendees requested that the USFA develop a model multi-agency incident command and response system for emergency information and assistance on hazardous materials.

USFA Major Actions - Hazardous Materials

- o NFA Hazardous Materials Courses. Resident and Outreach "Cluster Program" designed to enhance volunteer fire service par-



ticipation. Course - "Pesticide Fire and Spill Control" includes hazard recognition.

- o Courses at Academy for senior level officers. Planning for and controlling hazardous materials incidents.

USFA Actions Under Development - Hazardous Materials

- o Field Handbook. Describes procedures for treating victims of hazardous materials and radioactive substance accidents. (1981)
- o Additional Courses. Correct procedures to follow for first responding force to a hazardous materials incident. (1981)
- o Radiological Emergency Response Course.
- o Complete firefighter personal protective ensemble for hazardous materials. Similar to the Project FIRES outfit. (Research and development funding not yet obtained.)
- o Information on the modification of available turnout gear. Additional protection from hazardous materials. (Development and dissemination funding not yet obtained.)

Arson

The participants recommended that volunteer fire de-

partments conduct a program to identify arson-prone buildings in their communities and to enforce strict fire and building codes. They asked for state assistance in arson investigation through the formation of local arson task forces and by the development of a model arson law. The workshop proposed that the USFA develop training courses in arson detection and evidence preservation for volunteer firefighters, officers, and volunteer arson investigators.

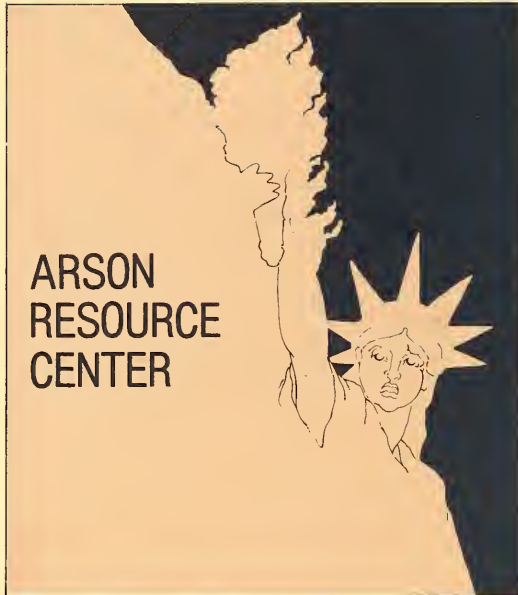
USFA Major Actions - Arson

- o Arson Resource Directory and Exchange Bulletin.
- o Nationwide workshops on Juvenile Firesetter problem. For local officials on how to counsel firesetting children and their families. Recently added workshops to the schedule: Illinois, North Carolina, Oregon, New York, Florida and Arkansas.
- o Interviewing and Counseling Juvenile Firesetters. A guide of suggestions by fire service representatives and psychologists of innovative counseling programs to reduce the incidence of fires set by juveniles. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents.

U.S. Government Printing Office.

- o Arson Resource Center. A clearinghouse for national information on arson. Responds to inquiries related to arson prevention and control.
- o LEAA Arson Task Force Assistance Program. Offers series of one-day motivation and orientation workshops at state and local levels to improve the effectiveness of arson prevention and control programs. Result of program - over 100 local arson task forces have been established across the nation.
- o 13 regional LEAA USFA arson detection courses.
- o "Arson Shield" Program. Intensive two week learning experience designed to better equip a community to deal with an arson problem. Combines National Fire Academy and Office of Planning and Education programs. Conducted in various areas of country. Composed of six programs:

1. Fire Arson Investigation Training Course (NFA)
 2. Fire Arson Detection three day program. (NFA)
 3. Arson Task Force Assistance Program half day workshop. (OPE)
 4. Arson Awareness and Public Education Program - half day seminar (OPE)
 5. Arson Information Management Systems Program - one day seminar. (OPE)
 6. Juvenile Firesetters Counselling Program one day workshop. (OPE)
- o Investigator's Handbook Published by the NBS-Center for Fire Research.



ARSON RESOURCE CENTER

in determining appropriate arson prevention and control strategies for rural and suburban areas.

Personnel Issues

Volunteer fire departments are concerned with the problems of retaining existing personnel as well as with recruiting new personnel. Workgroups felt that each volunteer department could improve recruitment and retention by communicating departmental requirements and by attempting to meet the firefighter's expectations. To help with these problems, participants called for the USFA to collect and disseminate information on model recruitment programs, model pension plans, and recognition and compensation techniques for volunteers. The workgroups recommended that the USFA should focus on exchanging information with state fire organizations on:

- o Motivation
- o Recruitment
- o Compensation
- o Safety

USFA Major Actions - Personnel Issues

- o Program on Women in the Fire Service. Provides resource materials and on-site assistance to departments interested in the recruiting of women into the fire service.
- o Volunteer Fire Service Management Course. An Outreach "Cluster Program" course. Subjects include: management principles planning, controlling, management by objectives, recruiting, policy and procedures for community relations.

USFA Actions Under Development - Personnel Issues

- o USFA Information System. Encourages volunteer departments to call or write directly to share best ideas on recruitment for dissemination through newsletter systems and through information centers. NFA toll free telephone number.

Community Relations

Participants sought procedures that volunteer departments could implement to up-

grade their community relations programs. Workgroups suggested appointing a trained public information officer to deal with the press and the community. They also felt it is necessary to demonstrate accountability and professionalism by reviewing departmental plans, service levels, training programs, and budgets with local public officials, as well as to establish a program to improve relations with the news media. In accord with this program, the workgroups pointed to the need to stress public ownership and document departmental achievements in news releases and reports. The workshop called upon the USFA to develop both basic and advanced courses to strengthen the volunteers' awareness of their accountability to the community and to develop media packages that correct misunderstandings about the role and needs of the Volunteer Fire Service.

USFA Major Actions - Community Relations

- o Public Fire Education Planning: A Five Step Process. Designed to implement a program any fire department can follow to attack particular fire loss problems. Describes a systematic approach to designing, implementing and evaluating public fire education programs. Targeted to meet local needs. (Available through GPO.)
- o NFA Course, Public Fire Education Specialist. For individuals with the primary responsibility for the design, development, and delivery of public fire safety education programs in their communities.

USFA Actions Under Development - Community Relations

- o Media Manual. Based on proceedings of conferences - "Fire Education and the Media" (Chicago)

USFA Actions Under Development - Arson

- o Volunteer Guide. Aids

and "PEAP Media" (Phoenix). Presentations of effective techniques to assist fire communicators in dealing with the press, other media, and community.

Business Management

The complexity of operating a volunteer fire department requires planning, sound business management, and trained managers. The workshop participants expressed the desire that the U.S. Fire Administration promote better business management by developing national standards and training courses for volunteer officers, providing a management information exchange, increasing support for master planning technical assistance, and developing a business procedures manual for volunteer departments.

USFA Major Actions - Business Management

- o *Volunteer Fire Service Management Administration Course*. Delivered in five 1980 clusters.
- o *Technical Support Specialists*. Available for local implementation of a master planning program to develop broad management of the total community fire protection systems.
- o *NFA Executive Development Course Series*. Provides opportunity for fire officers to expand their managerial approaches and improve the effectiveness of their organizations through increased knowledge of current management thinking and practices.

USFA Actions Under Development - Business Management

- o *NFA courses in Management of EMS and Physical Fitness Programs*.
- o *Workshops on the use of the recently developed system for writing pump-*

er specifications. (1981 Cluster) A Manual in printing.

Emergency Medical Services

EMS is a significant new problem area for the volunteer fire service because of the growing demand for improved emergency medical services. In accord with this, the participants resolved that all volunteers should be trained in basic first aid skills and CPR training. The USFA was asked to support volunteer involvement in EMS by developing a management course for emergency medical operations; by publishing handbooks on emergency medical public education resources and programs; and by maintaining an information exchange service on EMS training, operations, and management.

USFA Major Actions - Emergency Medical Services

- o *Publication of an EMS Resource Bulletin.*

- o *Establishment of an EMS Resource Exchange Center*. Provides technical assistance by telephone as well as through a national network of EMS experts and includes reference library.
- o *Program Development Guidebook for EMS systems and operations.*
- o *Publication of Procedures Handbook*. Describes procedures for field medical management of hazardous materials emergencies.
- o *Audio-Visual Presentation*. Describes the fire service involvement in EMS. Will be used by FEMA regional fire representatives as well as by technical support network.
- o *National Conference to identify EMS needs and priorities.* (Rockville, Maryland - December 3, 4, 5, 1979) 13 faculty members participated in needs assessment process.

- o *Three regional workshops in EMS*. Provides fire service EMS managers with latest information and provides input to USFA.
- o *NFA course on Management of EMS Programs.* (will be pilot-tested at Academy in August 1980)

USFA Actions Under Development - Emergency Medical Services

- o *EMS Information Resource Center*. Clearinghouse for fire service EMS information on locally developed projects - will publish catalog of EMS resources.
- o *EMS programs expanded and improved*. Development of EMS programs anticipated as a result of three regional workshops and input from volunteers regarding basic and advanced life support systems.



FIRST CLASS

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Highlights of National Volunteer Firefighter's Survey

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The objective of this research was to achieve a rough portrait of volunteer fire departments in order to better understand the volunteer, enabling officials and organizations to develop and improve fire prevention and control methods and training and education for the volunteer.

Volunteer fire services protect over half the nation's population and property. Despite the differences in volunteer fire service involvement, their unified dedication to the communities they serve is characteristic of the 849,000 volunteer firefighters in the United States.

The survey is part of the National Volunteer Fire Council research project funded by a U.S. Fire Administration grant. The findings are based on a mail survey of fire departments in the United States serving communities of 50,000 or less. About one-half million active volunteer firefighters are attached to almost 18,000 fire departments located in the United States' communities of less than 50,000 residents. The

questionnaires were received from 823 of 1,782 departments still in existence, for a response rate of 46 percent.

This study provides quantitative information on the major characteristics of the Volunteer Fire Service in the United States. The data includes age distribution of volunteer firefighters, the level of their training and where it is obtained, department funding, firefighter compensation, if any, in volunteer departments, types of fire incident reports maintained, inspection, public education practices and other characteristics. The survey report will be available as a source document in the U.S. Fire Library and will be made available through the National Technical Information Service.

Highlights of the Survey findings:

- o Over one-third of the active volunteer firefighters are 30 years old or younger. However, the average age of the volunteer firefighter is 39.
- o 87 percent of the volunteer fire departments serve district communities of less than 10,000 population.
- o Slightly over one-half (54 percent) of fire departments do not offer any cash compensation

to their volunteers. For the rest, compensation is variable. Roughly 44 percent of all departments pay some hourly or annual honorarium.

- o 26 percent of the fire departments receive financial support from sources other than the areas they protect - mostly from state and county funds. Only 6 percent of the funds come from a Federal source.
- o 96 percent make a written report of their fire calls.
- o 93 percent of the fire departments give their volunteers training in fire fighting. But the quality of training may be highly variable.
- o 83 percent of the volunteer fire departments produced an annual summary of activities.
- o 85 percent or four out of every five volunteer fire departments spend some time teaching fire safety to the public. Virtually all of the departments in larger communities teach fire safety.
- o 27 percent of the departments have prepared long range plans for fire protection in their communities.

- o A strong majority of the volunteer fire departments make fire safety inspections of institutions such as hospitals and nursing homes (64 percent), commercial buildings (71 percent), and factories or warehouses (63 percent). Only about one-half of the departments (48 percent) however, make inspections of private residences. The NTIS number for National Volunteer Firefighters Survey: A Report by Charles D. Palit is PB-80-199144. Price is \$6.00.

Conclusion

The United States Fire Administration, recognizing that approximately 80 percent of firefighters in this country are volunteers, has given the highest possible priority to the development and implementation of the Stonebridge 1979 proposals and recommendations. And further viewing the Volunteer Fire Service as one of the most important elements in the delivery system for immediate local response in time of disaster, the USFA will give equal attention and concern to the outcome of Stonebridge 1980. New ideas and priorities will be identified. Existing Federal support and assistance will continue with an even stronger commitment.